Tactical Integration of Conventional and Special Operations Forces in Training for a Complex World

A Monograph

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Current army doctrine provides a guide for the integration of conventional and special operations forces in combat, but provides little direction to guide the integration of conventional and special operations forces in a peacetime training environment. This monograph seeks to determine if and how the US Army should formalize the integration of conventional forces and special operations forces in training for the complex future. By analyzing instances of integration of conventional and special operations forces in the first two years of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, this monograph concludes that peacetime integration in training should be emphasized more, particularly at the combat training centers. Because of the uncertainty inherent in the future operating environment, a formal model for this integration in training could not be developed. Regardless, an increase in integration of conventional and special operations forces in training will inherently provide a common understanding that can be applied to integration in combat.

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Abstract

Tactical Integration of Conventional and Special Operations Forces in Training for a Complex World, by MAJ Darren Riley, 49 pages.

Current army doctrine provides a guide for the integration of conventional and special operations forces in combat, but provides little direction to guide the integration of conventional and special operations forces in a peacetime training environment. This monograph seeks to determine if and how the US Army should formalize the integration of conventional forces and special operations forces in training for the complex future. By analyzing instances of integration of conventional and special operations forces in the first two years of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, this monograph concludes that peacetime integration in training should be emphasized more, particularly at the combat training centers. Because of the uncertainty inherent in the future operating environment, a formal model for this integration in training could not be developed. Regardless, an increase in integration of conventional and special operations forces in training will inherently provide a common understanding that can be applied to integration in combat.

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This work is dedicated to the men and women who have and will continue to find themselves in the dark corners of the world on behalf of their nation.

Finally, I am eternally thankful for the love and support of my family: for my wife and daughters who have sacrificed their time to allow me to fight this nation's battles from the Fort Leavenworth library, and for my parents who have set the example of service to which I strive.

Acronyms

AOC	Army Operating Concept
CENTCOM	Central Command
CF	Conventional Forces
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CTC	Combat Training Center
FORSCOM	Forces Command
GSN	Global SOF Network
MTOE	Modified Table of Organization and Equipment
NA	Northern Alliance
ODA	Operational Detachment Alpha
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
RAF	Regionally Aligned Forces
SFG	Special Forces Group
SOF	Special Operations Forces
USASOC	US Army Special Operations Command
USSOCOM	US Special Operations Command

Introduction

After the attack on the United States on September 11, 2001, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) led the United States' response into Afghanistan. In quick order, the US Army Special Forces joined in close cooperation with the CIA and the Afghan Northern Alliance to fight and dismantle the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. As the war in Afghanistan progressed, the United States increased its conventional forces footprint, and soon conventional forces (CF), special operations forces (SOF), and CIA paramilitary activity all contributed to the swift destruction of al-Qaeda and Taliban forces in their strongholds. Throughout the conduct of the initial phase of OEF, there have been distinct examples of CF and SOF conducting operations together. For example, during Operation Anaconda in March 2002, elements of the Army's 10th Mountain Division and 101st Airborne Division paired with Army Special Forces, Delta Force, US Navy Seals, and the CIA to destroy Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in the Shahikot Valley. After this major operation, SOF and CF continued to integrate in new and often 'ad-hoc' ways. This integration continued despite any formal organization model for integration in peacetime training.

Conventional forces and SOF integration and interoperability is often asserted as a key to maximizing resources to accomplish missions. International relations and complexity theorist Robert Jervis describes this interaction effect in saying that "events that occur close together also can have a different impact than they would if their separate influences were merely summed." He goes on to explain this concept that the whole of a system is different than the sum of its parts.[1] Thinking systemically, CF and SOF integration has the potential to produce greater effects than if CF and SOF operated independently of each other. Despite this, CF and SOF integration is not fully embraced by either the conventional Army or the special operations community. United

[1] Robert Jervis, *System Effects: Complexity in Politics and Social Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 40; Robert Jervis, "Thinking Systemically About Geopolitics." *Geopolitics* 15, no. 1, (2010): 166.

States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has recently instituted the Global SOF Network (GSN) model, where USSOCOM integrates the US SOF more closely with international and intra-national SOF elements. Meanwhile, the Army has implemented the Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF) concept, where Army conventional brigades develop regionally based expertise and form habitual relationships with Geographic Combatant Commands to aid in conducting theater security cooperation activities.[2] Because of these initiatives, it is evident that SOF and CF will continue to operate in the same locations, toward the same objectives, in combat and non-combat operations in the future. Despite the emergence of the RAF and GSN concepts, and the theoretical ability for the whole of a system to be different than the sum of its parts, the Army has done little to formalize or foster continuous and lasting efforts for integrating special operations and conventional forces.

Because of the distinct training tempo, deployment tempo, geographic separation, and doctrinal missions of conventional and SOF units, any routine practice of pre-deployment integration and interoperability has been difficult to achieve. In light of the divergent home-station environments of SOF and conventional units, their integration while deployed, and the anticipated need to integrate more in the future, there lies a need to formalize integration and interoperability efforts. In the After Action Review of JRTC Rotation 13-09, a rotation including USASOC and the 82nd Airborne Division, BG Cavoli, the 82nd Airborne Assistant Division Commander, stated "I don't think that we can afford, in the next few years, to field a Special Operations army and a conventional army. . . This is a time to find the true commonalities and the true dependency on each other's particular skill-set."[3] As we have seen in recent military

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[2] US Army Training and Doctrine Command, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The US Army Operating Concept, Win in a Complex World* (Fort Eustis, VA: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2014), 47.

[3] Oak Grove Technologies, "CF, SOF, JIIM Work Together to Prepare for Future," 2014,

operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and in training, an integrated and interoperable Army will be a necessary component of the future force.

While SOF and conventional force integration and interoperability is not new, it will become increasingly appropriate as the Army implements the RAF and Global SOF concepts, participates in future operations as a member of a joint force, and seeks efficiency despite a reduction in resources. The purpose of this study is to determine how the Army should formalize CF and SOF integration in order to win in a complex world. This study specifically analyzes Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) because it reflects an example of how CF and SOF where forced to integrate in combat operations in an environment and against an enemy for which neither had specifically prepared. Furthermore, OEF and Operation Anaconda were chosen because there is a significant amount of unclassified material concerning operations in OEF. This study seeks to highlight cases of integration of conventional forces and SOF in the first years of OEF; this study is not meant to serve as a comprehensive account, nor will it attempt to analyze every combat action of every unit engaged in operations in OEF.

In addition to the Army Operating Concept's complex characterization of the world in which the emerging concepts of regional alignment and Global SOF Network will unfold, the Army has identified other challenges that will impede future force combat effectiveness. These Army Warfighting Challenges (AWfC) are defined by the Army Capabilities Integration Center (ARCIC) to encourage collaboration across a broad community in solving relevant anticipated challenges in order to guide future force development. This study attempts to address Army Warfighting Challenge #14 - How to integrate joint, interorganizational, and multinational partner capabilities and campaigns to ensure unity of effort and accomplish missions across the range of

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accessed August 13, 2015, http://www.oakgrovetech.com/news/cf-sof-jiim-work-together-prepare-future.

military operations.[4] This warfighting challenge encompasses the operations process, information sharing, training, and sustainment of integration and interoperability.

This study is concerned with the integration and interoperability of special operations forces and conventional forces. Special operations forces (SOF) include forces assigned to any of the services' special operations commands. Special operations forces are equipped and trained to conduct operations requiring unique modes of employment, tactical techniques, equipment, and training often conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments. SOF missions include unconventional warfare, direct action, special reconnaissance, foreign internal defense, and counterterrorism.[5] This can include units such as the Army Special Forces, Navy Seals, Marine Raider Battalions, and the Air Force's 1st Special Operations Wing. Special Forces twelve-man Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) teams made up a predominate quantity of the SOF that operated in and around CF in the early stages of OEF. Conversely, conventional forces include units assigned to US Army's Forces Command (FORSCOM), and include Brigade Combat Teams. Conventional forces differ from SOF in that they are larger in size and trained to have generalizable skills to execute a wide array of tasks. When referring to both conventional forces and special operations forces collectively, the research will simply use the term 'units'.

When describing the integration between CF and SOF, this study distinguishes between integration in both 'peacetime' and 'combat' operations. For consistency, 'peacetime' training includes home-station training and preparation activities not focused on any particular future deployment to a known area or against a known enemy. An example of this would be in the year 2000, when CF and SOF were training against a Soviet threat using the AirLand Battle concept,

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[4] "Army Warfighting Challenges (AWfC)", Army Capabilities Integration Center, last modified August 19, 2015, accessed: August 26, 2015, http://www.arcic.army.mil/Initiatives/army-warfighting-challenges.aspx.

[5] Special Operations Command, *Special Operations Forces Reference Manual*, 4th ed. (MacDill AFB, FL: Joint Special Operations University, 2015), 1-6.

with no particular 'combat' operations, like OEF, forecasted. Likewise, 'combat' operations include offensive, defensive, and stability operations during a named operation, such as OEF, with forces operating under deployment orders. This includes future named operations.

The author delineates named operations from regular combat operations within the major operation OEF. Named operations within OEF include operations such as Operation Anaconda and Operation Mountain Lion, in which theater assets are involved; these operations are generally joint in nature and are generally brigade sized or larger. Regular combat operations during OEF includes periods of sustained offensive, defensive, or stability operations and the periods in between these operations, that are not named operations; these operations are generally not joint in nature, and occur below the battalion level.

Any time that these separate units conduct operations together in time, space and purpose, they are considered integrated. US Army doctrine defines integration as "the arrangement of military forces and their actions to create a force that operates by engaging as a whole."[6] This is different from the interoperability of SOF and conventional units, which concerns "the ability to operate in synergy in the execution of assigned tasks."[7] The integration and interoperability of these units is aimed at maximizing positive *effects*, or outcomes, leading to mission accomplishment.[8]

The essence of this study is to determine how the Army can prepare for integration of CF and SOF within the context of the current US Army Operating Concept (AOC). This AOC, published in 2014, is the foundational document that the Army uses to guide future force

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[6] US Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1-02: Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington DC: Joint Doctrine Publications, 2010), 135.

[7] Ibid., 140.

[8] *Joint Publication 1-02, Military Terms*, 85.

development based on the future operating environment. The AOC considers the future enemy and environment to be complex–unknown, unknowable, and constantly changing.[9] This means that the Army must prepare itself, and learn how to integrate CF and SOF to operate in environments and against enemies for which neither can specifically prepare.

This study uses Operational Art as a theoretical guide. Doctrine defines operational art as "the pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose."[10] Additionally, it directs commanders to "create and maintain the conditions necessary to seize, retain, and exploit initiative and gain a position of relative advantage by linking tactical actions to reach a strategic objective."[11]

This study will analyze oral history interviews covering the period of 2000 through the end of 2002 to extrapolate Army leaders' thoughts on integration efforts and effectiveness in training and during military operations in OEF. Next, after action reviews (AARs) will also be used for the same purpose. These methods will be aimed at answering the primary research question: How can the Army maximize effects through integration of conventional forces and special operations forces in the future across the range of military operations? The starting hypotheses are: First, the effective integration of CF and SOF in operations begins well before major operations or combat deployments–it must start with peacetime training. Second, in order to effectively integrate in combat, the Army must establish habitual relationships between conventional and SOF units in training, much like SOF units already do amongst themselves. Third, because of the multitude of potential operations and force requirements in a complex, unknown and unknowable world, there cannot be a standard training model or single modified

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[9] *The US Army Operating Concept*, iii.

[10] Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), 9.

[11] Ibid., 10.

table of organization and equipment (MTOE) modification to achieve conventional and SOF integration, but there can be practices instituted during peacetime training to facilitate immediate and effective integration in emergent combat operations.

There area several limitations that bound this study beyond the control of the researcher. First, this study will only use unclassified sources for research, and will not contain or discuss any material that is at any higher classification. Because of this limitation certain operations, units, intelligence, and after action reports will be excluded from this study. This is to allow widest dissemination of the final study. Second, this study will only analyze instances of US military conventional and SOF interoperability. Any inclusion of international partners is only to provide context–they will not be a focus of this study.

Delimitations in this study arose from the vast amount of material available concerning operations in which CF integrated with SOF within and outside of Afghanistan throughout the 14 years of OEF. Subsequently, this study will focus on operations only within the Central Command's declared area of operations for OEF in Afghanistan. The period is limited to 2001 through the end of 2002. The logic for using this time frame is that the researcher seeks to capture a period in which the US Army was conducting combat operations in response to an unexpected event, and the time to prepare for a known operating environment was extremely limited. Likewise, the Army operated in an environment and against an enemy that it did not specifically train for. This is important because it lends significance to the need for institutionalizing practices of pre-deployment or peacetime integration to prepare for an unknown and unknowable future and enemy. Finally, this study will only consider units directly integrated from the individual to brigade or group level, purposefully excluding any analysis of joint force headquarters levels.

The following assumptions were held during the research for this study: First, the United States military will remain engaged worldwide, and the Army will lead the military efforts on the ground. Second, the United States will be inclined to first employ small sized special operations

forces elements to maintain a low-signature commitment to these military efforts prior to committing larger sized conventional forces. Third, there will be future conflict that are neither exclusively SOF or exclusively CF–both CF and SOF will continue to operate within the same areas of operation, conducting operations across the range of military operations.

This study is divided into six sections. This first section provided relevant background information and key definitions for the reader to understand the context of the study. Following this section is the literature review. The purpose of the literature review is to summarize the body of knowledge that currently exists that relates to conventional and special operations forces interoperability. This will also highlight the gaps in knowledge. The third section is the methodology. It will describe how the researcher performed the study. Section four is the case study. This section will analyze OEF and the integration of conventional and SOF. Section five is the findings and analysis, which will describe in detail the relevant aspects of OEF that highlight specific instances of conventional and SOF interoperability that answer the research questions. The final section provides a summary of the study, the implications for the US Army, and recommendations for further research.

Literature Review

This section provides the reader with the context of current thought on the subject of SOF and CF integration. The integration of SOF and CF has been an enduring topic of discussion with a renewed emphasis emerging after OEF began, with particular focus as a result of Operation Anaconda in 2001. There is a significant body of literature that both details and critiques the integration of CF and SOF in OEF, and offers tenets for effective integration on the battlefield. Despite this, there has been little focus on the pre-deployment integration in preparation for operations in the 'unknown' of the complex world. Given the multitude of AARs, studies, reports, and doctrine related to CF and SOF integration on the battlefield, there is a gap concerning how units can incorporate formal integration in preparation for the unknown world. This section will first outline the types of literature used for this research. Next, it will review the common terms used when discussing CF and SOF integration. Then, it will review the theoretical lens through which this research was conducted. Next, this section will review contemporary doctrine and arguments concerning CF and SOF integration. Next, this section introduces the studies hypothesis and the logic behind them. Finally, this section concludes with a summary.

Much of what has been written relevant to the topic of CF and SOF integration includes several types of sources, including military service doctrine, operational critiques and personal accounts, and academic research studies. This monograph intends to incorporate a mix of these sources. First, the researcher will survey US Army and Joint doctrine. Doctrine, the body of professional knowledge that guides how units perform certain tasks should reflect the lessons of history, and reflect how the Army intends to fight in the future. Next, there are numerous archived first hand accounts and after action reviews of OEF and Operation Anaconda specifically. The researcher will survey these available sources to determine how the Army in general, and specific units and leaders in particular, executed or facilitated effective integration of CF and SOF in OEF. Next, there are abundant independent and organizational studies that have

been completed on both OEF and Operation Anaconda. The independent studies are in the form of books and journal articles, and the institutional studies are in the form of Army Combat Studies Institute and Center For Army Lessons Learned reports. These sources will provide the basis of the historical account in of the operations, as well as important recommendations for institutional change that may relate specifically to integration of CF and SOF.

The conventional forces and SOF that participated in OEF and Operation Anaconda comprised several different operational task forces. Within the case study considered in this monograph, SOF includes the 5th Special Forces Group, 19th Special Forces Group, and 2-160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) that made up Joint Special Operations Task Force–North (JSOTF-N). Additionally, elements of the 3d Special Forces Group and the 3-160th SOAR formed JSOTF-South. These SOF elements were combined in 2002, to include the 7th, 19th, and 20th SFGs, 160th SOAR, and the 75th Ranger Regiment.

The conventional forces in the case study include the forces under Task Force *Mountain*. This TF, led by the 10th Mountain Division Headquarters, consisted of the 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, containing 1st and 2nd BNs, 187th Infantry, 1st BN 87th Infantry, 7-101st Aviation, B Company 1-159th Aviation, 3-101st Aviation, and 626th Support Battalion. Additional conventional forces came from the 82d Airborne Division's 1st and 2nd Brigades and their attached units. As noted earlier, integration refers to the *arrangement* of forces, whereas interoperability refers to the *ability* of forces to operate together. For brevity, the term integration will be used to describe both integration and interoperability of the units of the JSOTFs and Task Force *Mountain*.

The arrangement of *forces* in time and space is a key component in the arrangement of tactical *actions* in time, space, and purpose and is the reflection of how the Army intends to attain its strategic objectives. The theoretical link that coheres these tactical actions to the realization of strategic objectives is operational art.

The term 'operational art' itself became part of military lexicon in the 1920's, when Soviet theorist Georgii Isserson described his observation of the emerging trends of operations in depth and the operational depth of battlefields in modern warfare. He described "the very essence of operational art presupposes freedom of methods and forms which should be carefully chosen" and that the "outcomes of operations directly depends upon how the enemy is influenced on a tactical scale." Finally, he describes operations as a weapon of strategy, foreshadowing the concept of linking tactical actions to strategic effects that is seen in contemporary US doctrine.[12]

First introduced into the US doctrine in 1986, operational art has today become a central component of the Army's Unified Land Operations doctrine.[13] Current doctrine defines operational art as "the pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose."[14] Additionally, operational art directs commanders to "create and maintain the conditions necessary to seize, retain, and exploit initiative and gain a position of relative advantage by linking tactical actions to reach a strategic objective."[15] This doctrinal concept is relative to military theory professor James Schneider's explanation of operational art as applicable to this monograph: the creative use of operations, an ensemble extended in time and space, unified in common aim, for the purposes of strategy.[16] This framework is relevant to viewing the CF and SOF integration in OEF because the creative integration of SOF and CF, and the ultimate aim of each, was to contribute to achieving the strategic objectives of deposing the Taliban and deny Afghanistan as a save haven for al Qaeda.

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[12] Georgii Samoilovich Isserson, *The Evolution of Operational Art* (1937, reprint, trans. by Bruce W. Menning Fort Leavenworth, KS: SAMS Theoretical Special Edition, 2005), vi-vii.

[13] James J. Schneider, Ph. D, *Vulcan's Anvil* (Presidio Press, 1994; repr., Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 16 June 1992), 20

[14] ADP 3-0, 9.

[15] Ibid., 10.

[16] Schneider, 35, 58.

There is a significant collection of Army and joint doctrine that includes some level of focus on integration of CF and SOF. Despite this, there is only one manual devoted solely to the topic of integration–Field Manual 6-05, *Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Conventional Forces and Special Operations Forces Integration and Interoperability*. This manual is a collection of material related specifically to integration and interoperability gathered from the wide body of joint and service doctrine. While it is a very inclusive collection of TTPs, its primary focus is on guiding the integration of CF and SOF in combat operations, from "mission development to achievement of the desired end state."[17] There is very little mention on integration in peacetime or prior to a deployment. In several areas the manual refers to lessons learned, often referring to the recent conflicts in Iraq or Afghanistan, and offer several points. First, units are encouraged to establish habitual training and mission relationships through pre-deployment training–at combat training centers, joint exercises, and unit visits. Next, CF units are encouraged to "align" with SOF team rotations.[18] These principles are sound, but they appear to be biased by continuous and recurring deployment rotations that units have experiences in OEF and Operation Iraqi Freedom, and do not account for how units can prepare to integrate for emerging missions in an unknown world.

Other doctrine that individually addresses CF or SOF is similarly focused on the combat integration of units. FM 3-05[19] *Army Special Operations Forces* details at length the benefits of interoperability and integration, and provides mitigations to many of the challenges of interoperability and integration. Like other doctrinal sources, its focus is on integration in combat

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[17] Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (MSTTP) 6-05, *Conventional Forces and Special Operations Forces Integration, Interoperability, and Interdependence* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 21.

[18] Ibid., 161.

[19] Field Manual (FM) 3-05, *Special Operations Forces* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001).

and provides little to guide units in integration efforts in peacetime in home-station training. The existing doctrine certainly provides information that can be made relevant to home station training and integration, but does little to fill the void of how to integrate in preparation for the unknown and unknowable.

Several institutional studies have been completed that cover the integration of CF and SOF. Several of these studies, including MAJ Joseph Stroud's 2012 monograph that provides an analysis of Operation Anaconda. While the focus of these studies and their conclusions vary, they too are predominantly oriented only on the integration of CF and SOF on-the-ground in ongoing combat operations. MAJ Stroud's study focused on the command and control of integrated CF and SOF and asserts that while friction between the two will never completely go away, a doctrinally structured C2 relationship will alleviate unnecessary friction.[20]

Another significant study conducted in 2003 is MAJ Eric Brown's masters thesis, "Army Special Operations Forces Integration at the Combat Training Centers." MAJ Brown identifies nine trends of integration prior to 2003, and provides several recommendations for how the Army can more effectively integrate Army SOF and Army CF and the combat training centers (CTCs) in the future. His first two recommendations concern changes in institutional leader education and Army doctrine, but his final six recommendations include changes specifically to the mechanics of CTC rotations and staffing. Based on this researcher's personal experience alone, it is evident that the CTCs have changed significantly since 2003 in ways that foster CF and SOF integration. Despite this, there remains little professional literature on integrating CF and SOF in home station training for a complex world. Furthermore, CTC rotations are very short periods of any unit's training path, and many units do not have the opportunities to attend these expensive rotations. Integration should not be limited to just occurring at the CTCs.

[20] Gregory M. Stroud, "SOF Integration with Conventional Forces: A Doctrine Gap?" (Monograph, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2012), 38.

Lastly, several books provide insight relevant to this study. Lester Grau's *Operation Anaconda* and Sean Naylor's *Not a Good Day to Die* provides comprehensive accounts of the events leading to and the conduct of Operation Anaconda in March 2002. Next, *Weapon of Choice, ARSOF in Afghanistan* and *A Different Kind of War: The US Army in Operation Enduring Freedom,* both published by the US Army's Combat Studies Institute, provide official histories of the army SOF and CF in the initial years of OEF. These books will provide a basis for the structured case study of OEF.

The following are the starting hypotheses used in this study. First, the effective integration of conventional forces and SOF in operations begins well before deployment–it must start with training. Second, the Army must establish habitual relationships between conventional and SOF units in training, much like SOF units already do amongst themselves. Third, because of the multitude of potential operations and force requirements in a complex, unknown and unknowable world, there cannot be a standard training model or single MTOE modification to achieve conventional and SOF integration. There can be, however, practices instituted prior to deployments to facilitate immediate and effective integration in emergent combat operations.

Section Summary

This section provided a review of the pertinent literature referenced in this study. A variety of official and subjective histories, and personal interviews were used. The existing literature makes great effort to encourage CF and SOF integration and explains the benefits of effective integration, and the pitfalls of non-integration. Likewise, the literature provides ample principles to incorporate to overcome challenges of integration. A gap exists in the literature covering CF and SOF integration and how to best accomplish this in a peacetime or home-station environment in training for a complex world. The next section will outline the researcher's methodology for analyzing the first eighteen months of OEF to determine how the Army can best prepare for integration of SOF and CF in a complex world.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to determine how the Army can maximize effects through integration of conventional forces and special operations forces in the future across the range of military operations. This section explains how the researcher intends test the following hypotheses: First, that effective integration and interoperability begins with training prior to deployment; second, that this can be accomplished through establishing habitual relationships; third, that there cannot be a standard training model or single MTOE modification to achieve conventional and SOF integration, but there can be practices instituted prior to deployments to facilitate immediate and effective integration in emergent combat operations.

This study uses the structured, focused approach developed by George and Bennett to analyze the single case study of OEF to analyze the instances of SOF and CF integration and interoperability. Using this method, the researcher applies a set of standardized questions, the *structure*, to an identified class or subclass of events and time to be studied, the *focus,* within their selected case. The structured questions must be grounded in the theoretical perspective and research objective of the study.[21] This study uses the class of conventional forces (CF) and special operations forces (SOF) interoperability and integration within the conduct of OEF in Afghanistan from 2001-2002 as the case.

Six structured questions are asked of the case to find the empirical data so that the researcher can test the hypotheses. The first two questions deal with the context of CF and SOF integration, while the next four questions deal with the execution of the integration efforts. The following questions will analyze the context of the integration: first, what types of units between individual and brigade/group level integrated for the conduct of operations, and for what types of

[21] Andrew Bennett and Alexander L. George, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences (BCSIA Studies in International Security)* (United States: The MIT Press, 2005), 67-72.

operations? This will provide the data from which the researcher will extrapolate the trends toward integration of units, quantify the instances of integration, and will establish the context of the analysis. Second, what drove these units to integrate their operations? Determining the causation of integration between CF and SOF will assist in identifying instances or operations in the future that will require, or benefit from, CF and SOF integration. The researcher expects to find that integration is predominantly caused by a need sharing of resources or capabilities between the types of forces.

Questions three through six relate to the execution of integration efforts: Third, did these units prepare for integration and interoperability prior to conducting operations? By determining the scope of preparation, the researcher will identify if there exists the basis for a model or MTOE modification that should be formalized to assist future integration between CF and SOF for future operations. The researcher expects to find that instances of integration were conducted on an ad-hoc basis, as the need arose, with little or no pre-deployment or peacetime planning or training conducted. Fourth, how did the units integrate across warfighting functions during operations? Analyzing the unit's integration in the context of the warfighting functions–mission command, movement and maneuver, intelligence, logistics, protection, and fires–will provide clarity for defining future environments in which integration will be needed, and specifically how to prepare units to best achieve smooth integration prior to operations. Fifth, did the units continue integration and interoperability efforts beyond just immediate operations by fostering habitual relationships to prepare for future operations? The duration of the integration will provide a forecast for the future need to integrate and thereby determine the level of need for institutionalizing a model of integration in peacetime training. Finally, what after action critiques are available for instances of interoperability and integration regarding these operations? By asking this question, the researcher seeks to determine the effectiveness and the yield of the integration–was the effort worth the outcome? The researcher expects to find that instances of

integration enhance operations in ways that negate any friction that may be caused.

The measurable criteria that the researcher will use to evaluate the integration of CF and SOF is the execution of operations in common time, space, and purpose between conventional and SOF units. Instances of integration must include at least two of the three factors, with common purpose being present in all instances. For example, a conventional army company and a special forces team that operate in the same geographic area during the same time period cannot be considered integrated because they do not share a common purpose. Although sharing a common purpose does not necessarily mean that units are integrated, the baseline requirement of sharing a common purpose provides the minimum criteria for consideration in the case study.

This study will answer the structured focused questions using data collected from unclassified primary and secondary source documents. Primary source documents will include the use of personal interviews, first-hand accounts, after action reviews and current and former US military doctrine. Secondary source documents will include academic research and studies.

This section has reviewed the overall purpose for this research and introduced the structured focus approach used for the design of this research. The structured focus approach method was selected for its standardization of data collection through the seven questions that the researcher has formulated for analysis of the single case study of OEF. Operation Enduring Freedom was selected for its contemporary relevance and its nature as a war that the United States Army fought in response to a crisis, and did not specifically train for a known enemy or known operating environment. The next section will present the case study of OEF through 2002.

Case Study: Operation Enduring Freedom

This section will use the single case-study approach to analyze the deliberate and unplanned integration of CF and SOF in the first two years of OEF in Afghanistan. The historical and operational context of OEF will be presented, as well as a summary of major events and units involved. Next, the structured questions will be posed, followed by the researcher's assessment of each question as it relates to the case. Operation Enduring Freedom, and one of it's early, hallmark battles, Operation Anaconda, were selected because they represents a time that US CF and SOF were operating in an environment for which they did not specifically plan or train. This is representative of the battlefields of the complex future–unknown.

Operation Enduring Freedom was the US led coalition military response to the al-Qaeda attack on the United States on September 11, 2001. Early in the morning of 11 September, four commercial airplanes leaving from airports in the northeastern US were hijacked while in flight by al-Qaeda terrorists. Within a span of 90 minutes, one plane was deliberately crashed into each of the two World Trade Center buildings in New York City and a third plane was deliberately crashed into the Pentagon in Washington DC. A fourth hijacked plane was crashed into an open field in Shanksville, PA.[22] This attack, which became known as 9/11, was the impetus for the Bush administration's declaration of the "Global War on Terrorism" (GWOT). By the afternoon of the 11th, Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet, attributed the attacks to a senior member of al-Qaeda, Khalid Sheik Muhammed, and the leader, Osama bin Laden. By the evening

[22] At 8:46 am EST, American Airlines Flight 11, traveling from Boston to Los Angeles, struck the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. At 9:03 am EST, United Airlines Flight 175, traveling from Boston to Los Angeles, struck the South Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. At 9:37 am EST, American Airlines Flight 77, traveling from Dulles, Virginia to Los Angeles, struck the Pentagon Building in Washington, DC. At 10:03 am EST, United Airlines Flight 93, traveling from Newark, New Jersey to San Francisco, crashes in a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. This plane was likely intended to hit the White House or Capitol Building in Washington DC.

of the 11th, President Bush declared "We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them." Through the course of several National Security Council meetings in the following days, President Bush made the formal request that the DoD and DoS develop military and diplomatic options to eliminate al-Qaeda and deal with the Taliban who harbored al-Qaeda, including the possibility of a ground forces invasion of Afghanistan.[23]

Prior to 9/11, both al-Qaeda and the Taliban were identified as threats, but the US military did not have a developed contingency plan involving conventional military forces for operations against either group, or for conventional operations in Afghanistan. On the heels of the August 1998 bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and the October 2000 bombing of the USS *Cole* by al-Qaeda, the CIA and US special operations elements did have, however, developed plans for surgical air strikes and covert action against al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan in the contingency plan *Operation Infinite Resolve*. These plans did not include the use of conventional forces in Afghanistan. Furthermore, President Bush declared to the 9/11 Commission in an unrecorded meeting, that prior to 9/11, he had no "good options for special military operations against bin Laden."[24] Additionally, the CENTCOM Commander, General Tommy Franks, asserted to the 9/11 Commission, that the existing Operation Infinite Resolve plan was not a suitable or complete plan for a ground invasion into Afghanistan.[25] Consequently, although there was an emphasis on air strikes and limited special operations in Afghanistan, there was not a concerted effort to train or prepare specifically for conventional forces, or integrated conventional and SOF operations in Afghanistan.

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[23] Thomas H Kean and Lee H Hamilton, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (Washington, DC: National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004), 325-338.

[24] President Bush and Vice President Cheney meeting (Apr. 29, 2004) quoted in Kean and Hamilton, *The 9/11 Commission*, 208.

[25] Kean and Hamilton, *The 9/11 Commission*, 332.

Within two weeks after the attacks, on 21 September, the President approved CENTCOM's new concept of operations against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan–Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). In a four phased operation, the US would first move and stage forces in neighboring countries Uzbekistan and Pakistan, and make contact with the leaders of the Northern Alliance, the anti-Taliban militia that controlled small portions of northern, central and western sections of the Taliban-ruled country. In Phase Two, US would conduct air strikes and SOF and CIA teams would train and advise the Northern alliance to degrade al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Next, in Phase Three, the US would deploy 10,000-12,000 troops to conduct decisive operations to depose the Taliban regime in whole, and to eliminate al-Qaeda and their sanctuary. The fourth phase of this operation was to be a transition to stability operations and the eventual transition of responsibility of security and governance to the Afghan government, with an international coalition to conduct humanitarian operations.[26]

In an effort to avoid the perception of a hostile invasion and inciting the citizens of Afghanistan into an armed struggle against the US, CENTCOM sought to avoid large-scale ground force commitments by using the Northern Alliance as the main effort and ground component.[27] Because US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM or SOCOM) executed global counterterrorism and unconventional warfare (UW) operations, SOCOM's Army component, US Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), would provide the special operations forces–Special Forces, Rangers, Aviation, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations

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[26] Donald P Wright, James R Bird, and Peter W Connors, *A Different Kind of War: The United States Army in Operation Enduring Freedom, October 2001 - September 2005* (United States: Combat Studies Institute Press, US Army Combined Arms Center, 2010), 27; Kean and Hamilton, *The 9/11 Commission*, 325-338.

[27] General Victor Eugene Renuart, interview by Contemporary Operations Study Team, 31 May 2007, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 3-4. [Unpublished interview transcript.]

units–for OEF. These SOF units would be assigned to SOCOM's command in CENTCOM, Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT) for the execution of OEF. Army SOF in SOCCENT developed a seven-phased plan to lead the Northern Alliance in an insurgency against the Taliban. US Army Special Forces were to conduct the UW with the Northern Alliance.[28]

Initial staging base for operations was the Karshi-Khanabad (K2) air base in Uzbekistan, and additional air bases in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Pakistan were secured through diplomatic negotiations. The first Army forces began deploying to K2 by October 5, 2001, including elements of the 5th Special Forces group and 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment (1-87 IN) from the 10th Mountain Division. These units fell under the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) established by the Air Force Special Operations Command's 16th Special Operations Wing. Shortly after the establishment of the K2 airbase, with initial combat search and rescue (CSAR) capabilities established, the Joint Forces Air Component Command (JFACC), operating out of the Combined Air Operations Center in Saudi Arabia, began the air campaign on October 7, 2001.[29]

The air campaign would set the conditions for the introduction of ground forces into theater. Initial targets included the Taliban anti-aircraft, armor, and artillery capabilities, and training facilities. Within the first two weeks, the air strikes exhausted the pre-planned target list and began to strike at targets of opportunity.[30] With the air campaign progressing as planned, the JSOTF, now under 5th SF Group (5th SFG) Commander COL John Mulholland, continued to prepare plans for the insertion of his SF teams into Afghanistan. During this period, the 1-87 IN Battalion, tasked to provide airfield security at K2, fell under tactical control (TACON) of COL

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[28] Wright, Bird, and Connors, *A Different Kind of War*, 47-48.

[29] Ibid., 62-67.

[30] Ibid., 64.

Mulholland's JSOTF-North.[31]

On October 19, 2001, the first Special Forces teams entered Afghanistan to begin the ground campaign with the Northern Alliance. Seven Operational Detachments–Alpha (ODA) teams and a command and control team from 5th SFG were inserted between October 19th and November 8th to conduct link-ups with eight Northern Alliance Generals throughout Afghanistan.[32]

In the north, ODAs and their partnered Northern Alliance units seized an airfield in Mazar-e-Sharif. Next, three ODAs and their Northern Alliance units coordinated several successive operations to prepare for the seizure of the key city of Konduz. One of these operations was a unilateral assault by the three Northern Alliance units to seize Taloqan. Although General Bariullah's Northern Alliance did suffer a failed unilateral assault on the town of Bolduc, this defeat was easily overcome when the partnered ODA guided airstrikes in support of a renewed Northern Alliance assault. Finally, the Northern Alliance units in the north conducted a siege of Konduz, leading to the Taliban surrender of the key city. As a result of SOF directed precision guided munitions supporting the indigenous Northern Alliance forces, the SOF of JSOTF-N were able to capture key cities in northern Afghanistan and defeat the Taliban infantry and armor defenses of northern Afghanistan in nearly six weeks.[33]

The ODA's success in capturing key cities in the north was replicated in the south, though without the benefit of the robust Northern Alliance forces. The ODAs operating in southern and eastern Afghanistan in the initial months were able to rely on various anti-Taliban resistance groups to conduct similar seizures of the key cities, including the capital city Kabul and

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[31] Wright, Bird, and Connors, *A Different Kind of War*, 67

[32] Ibid., 73-75.

[33] Ibid., 71-88.

Kandahar. One major SOF operation in the south included the parachute assault by elements of the 75th Ranger Regiment to seize an airfield outside of Kandahar on October 20th.[34] After the fall of these major cities, US intelligence suggested that many al-Qaeda leaders and their forces were gathering in the mountain pass of Tora Bora that connected Afghanistan to Pakistan. In a two week operation in early December, ODAs and their partnered Eastern Alliance, in addition to other US and UK SOF, battled the remaining al-Qaeda forces in Tora Bora. Despite success in degrading al-Qaeda, it is purported that as many as 1,500 fighters, including Osama bin Laden and his deputies, were able to escape into Pakistan. By mid-December, US SOF and partnered indigenous forces had defeated the majority of the al-Qaeda and Taliban forces and deposed the Taliban government in Afghanistan. US intelligence soon began to point to the Shahikot Valley in Paktia Province as a remaining sanctuary of Taliban and al-Qaeda forces.[35]

Seeking to eliminate the last al-Qaeda and Taliban concentrations in the Shahikot, CENTCOM began focusing on planning for a major operation in the region–what would become known as Operation Anaconda. Planning for this operation took place between January and February of 2002, and the operation began on March 2nd. Commanded by Combined Joint Task Force *Mountain*, the 10th Mountain Division commander MG Franklin Hagenbeck, this operation was the first major operation of the war that integrated CF and SOF elements. Conventional US infantry battalions conducted an air assault into blocking positions while SOF led Northern Alliance units cleared the valley. After two weeks of intense direct combat that followed the TF *Mountain* air assault and Afghan and ODA ground assaults into the valley, several hundred Taliban and al-Qaeda forces were killed or captured, while an unknown number were able to

[34] Wright, Bird, and Connors, *A Different Kind of War*, 95.

[35] Ibid., 93-121.

escape into Pakistan.[36] Different audiences have considered this major battle both a success and a failure, but it served as an example of the integration of CF and SOF mutually operating in time and space to achieve a common purpose–the destruction of the Taliban and al-Qaeda.[37]

Although the Taliban and al-Qaeda suffered heavy losses in Operation Anaconda and had been cleared of many areas, they were not completely defeated. The focus of CENTCOM then became the stability of the Afghan state–regional security, reconstruction, and the training of Afghan security forces–to prevent the Taliban and al-Qaeda from reconstituting or regaining control in Afghanistan. This shift in focus also marked a shift in effort; the SOF led campaign ended, conventional force levels grew, and conventional force operations became more prevalent in the CJTF's full spectrum operations.[38]

Structured Focused Questions

The first structured questioned examined is: what types of units between individual and brigade or group level integrated for the conduct of operations, and for what types of operations? Prior to Operation Anaconda, there were several instances of SOF and CF operating in common time and space for a common purpose. The first instance was prior to forces entering Afghanistan at the Karshi-Khanabad (K2) air base in Uzbekistan, the initial basing site for the 5th Special Forces Group and the location of the Joint Special Operations Task Force North (JSOTF-N). The 1-87 Infantry Battalion from the 10th Mountain Division provided the base security and provided the quick reaction force (QRF) for the combat search and rescue (CSAR) teams operating out of

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[36] Wright, Bird, and Connors, *A Different Kind of War,* chap. 6; Richard W. Stewart, *Operation Enduring Freedom: October 2001-March 2002* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), 30-44.

[37] Stewart, *Operation Enduring Freedom,* 33.

[38] Wright, Bird, and Connors, *A Different Kind of War,* 209.

the base. Because the 5th SFG commander, COL Mulholland, was the senior army commander on the ground at the time, he assumed tactical control (TACON)[39] of the 1-87 IN within his Joint Special Operations Task Force. This command relationship remained until the 10th Mountain Division headquarters established itself as the Combined Forces Land Component Command on December 12, 2001.[40]

The next instance of CF and SOF integration was at the Qala-i-Jangi prison on November 25, 2001. At this event, an infantry platoon from the C Co, 1-87th IN, a military police element, and ODA 533 responded as a QRF to the uprising of hundreds of Taliban and al-Qaeda prisoners interned in the Northern Alliance base and makeshift prison. After a Taliban captive attacked a guard and grabbed the guard's AK47, he was able to release other captives within the complex, leading to a six-day siege of the fortress complex. After CF and SOF were able to isolate or kill a majority of the escaped Taliban, the siege finally ended on 01 December, after a remaining group of Taliban was flooded out of the basement that they were hiding in. [41]

The next major instance of CF and SOF integration was at the eighteen-day battle of Operation Anaconda in March 2002. In this operation, US SOF elements provided deep reconnaissance, one special operations aviation battalion provided airlift, and six ODAs led close to one thousand Afghan Army soldiers. Conventional forces included 1-187 and 2-187 IN BNs

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[39] Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013, 266. Tactical Control is a command relationship established between two units to where the lead unit has the authority to direct the actions of the supporting unit, but does not have the authority to reassign the unit of change the task organization of the unit.

[40] Wright, Bird, and Connors, *A Different Kind of War,* 127.

[41] Charles H. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice: ARSOF in Afghanistan* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2003), 104; Wright, Bird, and Connors, *A Different Kind of War,* 84; Sarah Albrycht, Major, interview by Operational Leadership Experiences Project Team, 13 March, 2007, digital recording, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 6-8.

from the 101st Airborne Division and the 1-87 IN BN (OPCON) from the 10th Mountain Division. The CF and a majority of the SF-led indigenous forces provided the "anvil", an inner and outer cordon, of the Shahikot Valley, while a smaller element of SF-led Afghan forces provided the "hammer", the main attack to clear the valley floor.[42] An additional battalion, while not supporting Operation Anaconda directly, 3-187 IN from 3/101 supported the CF and SOF headquarters, sustainment elements, and ODAs at Kandahar airfield, before moving to secure 3d BN 7th SFG and the US Embassy compounds in Kabul.[43] In addition to the integration of the larger conventional companies and battalions with SF teams, there are numerous examples of lower level integration of small SOF teams with conventional platoons and companies. One example of this is the attached, three-man special operations team-alpha (SOT-A) that the A/1-87 IN company commander, as well as other commanders in TF *Rakkasan*, employed to develop a better understanding of the enemy disposition throughout the Shahikot Valley.[44] Not only did these SOT-A attachments contribute to building the intelligence picture for the conventional commanders, in one battle on the first day of Operation Anaconda, they directly supported the conventional units by providing direct fires, called and directed close air support (CAS) missions, and also assisted in providing first aid and executing casualty evacuations for the conventional commanders.[45]

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[42] Stewart, *Operation Enduring Freedom*, 46.

[43] Major Tito Villanueva, interview by Operational Leadership Experiences Project Team, December 8, 2006, digital recording, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 4; Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, 218.

[44] Major Roger Crombie, interview by Operational Leadership Experiences Project Team, March 30, 2006, digital recording, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 7; Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, 292; Field Manual (FM) 3-05.102, *Special Operations Forces Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), 3-10. A special operations team alpha (SOT-A) is a low-level, threat signals intelligence collection team normally assigned to special operations forces.

[45] Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice,* 291.

The second structured question examined is: what drove these units to integrate their operations? There are several reasons that the conventional units integrated with the SOF units throughout the first year of OEF. Each type of force provided a certain capability or expertise that the other needed but did not have.

Because 5th SFG was the first major SOF unit to establish a presence in the OEF AOR, they established the initial logistics support areas (LSA) throughout the theater. Deploying initially to K2, 5th SFG established a temporary logistical support element in the EUCOM AO, before consolidating the logistics support area at K2 with the 5th SFG HQ in December 2001. After this move, 5th SFG began expanding the logistical footprint by establishing LSAs at major airfields in Afghanistan that would allow the sustainment of both SOF and conventional forces.[46]

At K2, prior to Operation Anaconda, the 1-87 IN BN provided base security, quick reaction elements, reserve forces and logistics support for the JSOTF, based primarily on the limited manpower organic to the JSOTF. Likewise, SOF provided logistical airlift capacity to the conventional units. For example, as 1-87 IN BN moved elements into Afghanistan, they did not have readily available air transportation to logistically support those units from K2, so in exchange for manpower in constructing and loading pallets of SOF supplies on SOF aircraft, the SOF operating from K2 would help ferry 1-87 IN supplies to Bagram, Afghanistan.[47]

The 65th Military Police (MP) Company, deployed in November 2001, was the sole military police unit in theater. This MP company, collocated at K2 with JSOTF-North, assumed the base security role from the 1-87 IN BN, freeing them to assume a QRF role. Maintaining an element at K2, the MP Company deployed platoons into Afghanistan by December 2001.

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[46] Master Sergeant Dale Aaknes, Personal experiences paper, US Army Sergeants Major Academy, September 29, 2006, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 10.

[47] Major William Rodebaugh, interview by Operational Leadership Experiences Project Team, February 23, 2010, digital recording, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 3-8.

Arrayed across the theater, the MP units integrated in several ways. First, they integrated with SF elements to secure their safe houses, allowing the SF teams to conduct unconventional warfare with the Northern Alliance. Next, they conducted detainee escort operations for the SF teams; after the Qala-i-Jangi prison uprising, MP platoons secured and escorted prisoners to the newly established holding facility in Bagram. This MP company was driven to support the SOF in order to both provide a specific capability, detainee handling, and to account for a personnel shortfall, by securing SF safe houses and other SOF installations to allow SOF personnel to conduct SOF specific tasks.[48]

As Task Force *Dagger*'s Special Forces teams and their Northern Alliance counterparts continued their search for Taliban and al-Qaeda in November 2001, intelligence increasingly pointed to the concentrating enemy forces in the Shahikot Valley. The SF teams, and their reluctant Afghan forces, shared the concern that a SOF and Afghan only operation to clear the Shahikot Valley would not be feasible. Reflecting on operations in Tora Bora, TF *Dagger* and the CENTCOM planners sought to avoid the mass escape of Taliban or al-Qaeda forces into Pakistan a second time–conventional US infantry would be needed to establish blocking positions along routes to Pakistan.[49] The dense enemy presence identified by COL Mulholland's *TF Dagger* elements drove the need to integrate with larger conventional forces in an operation to clear the well-defended valley; COL Mulholland made the recommendation to the CJTF *Mountain* commander, MG Hagenbeck, that CJTF *Mountain* lead what would became Operation Anaconda.[50] By February 15, 2002, CJTF *Mountain* assumed responsibility for the planning and

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[48] Major Sarah Albrycht, interview by Operational Leadership Experiences Project Team, March 13, 2007, digital recording, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 6-8.

[49] Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die*, 48.

[50] Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, 385; Brigadier General John Mulholland, interview by Contemporary Operations Study Team, May 7, 2007, Combat Studies Institute, Fort

command and control of the largest operation of the war, with TF *Dagger* elements TACON to the division–nearly fifteen days before the operation was to begin.[51]

As the planning for Operation Anaconda evolved, the conventional planners saw the need to employ SOF special reconnaissance assets to develop the needed intelligence to drive the ground maneuver plan. Early in the planning process, a conventional infantry company, A/1-87 IN, was assigned to support a special forces team as they performed reconnaissance of the Shahikot Valley.[52] As the start of the operation drew closer, SOF and CIA elements organized into special reconnaissance teams to gather intelligence, and were inserted less than 36 hours prior to the start of the operation to directly support the conventional forces and ODAs.[53] The integration of SOF intelligence capabilities with conventional units continued through the operation, as SOT-A attachments directly supported the TF *Rakkasan* infantry companies.[54] These cases of SOF and CF integration were driven by the conventional forces need for the unique reconnaissance capabilities that the SOF possessed.

In this operation, the first Afghan force with their ODA mentors, TF Anvil, were to establish blocking positions along routes on western side of the Shahikot Valley. Next, TF Rakassan, two US infantry battalions, were to conduct a helicopter assault into inner blocking positions on the eastern floor of the valley, while a second Afghan force with their ODA mentors, TF Hammer, were to conduct a ground assault into the western side of the valley.[55]

Leavenworth, KS, 8. [Unpublished interview transcript.]

[51] Stewart, *Operation Enduring Freedom*, 32.

[52] Crombie, interview, March 30, 2006, 5.

[53] Henry A. Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence: Lessons from a Life in the CIA's Clandestine Service* (New York: Penguin Putnam, 2012), 262; Wright, Bird, and Connors, *A Different Kind of War,* 141.

[54] Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, 292.

[55] Stewart, *Operation Enduring Freedom*, 33. TF *Anvil* consisted of ODAs 542, 381, 571,

As the operation commenced on 2 March 2002, TF Anvil experienced difficulty on their nighttime ground movement into position. Degraded road conditions and heavy enemy contact caused them to sustain significant casualties, which prevented them from occupying their planned positions. The SF ODAs paused their advance to reorganize their forces. After 1-87th IN BN air-assaulted into their positions they experienced significant enemy contact; they sustained heavy casualties and were eventually extracted within 24 hours of their initial air assault. The 2-187th IN was then repositioned to clear the eastern floor of the valley. Meanwhile, the operational reserve, 1-187th IN BN was employed to clear the eastern ridgeline of the valley. After a period of refit, 1-87th IN BN was reinforced with two additional companies (C/4-31 IN and B/1-187 IN) and a mortar platoon. Now TF *Summit*, it was reinserted into the valley to clear the southern portion of the eastern ridgeline, along with 1-187th IN BN.[56]

After a three-day period of refit and reorganization, TF Anvil was reinforced with a mechanized Afghan force and their partnered ODA 394. The now 1100-man Afghan and US Special Forces task force was able to complete their assaults on the western edge of the valley, clearing simultaneously from the north and south. Once a variation of the original positions was occupied and cleared, the conventional and SOF TFs continued clearing and exploitation operations in and around the Shahikot Valley. Operation Anaconda was concluded on 19 March 2002. Throughout the operation, there are instances where SOF reconnaissance and sniper teams directly supported the conventional maneuver units.[57]

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and 392, and Afghan Generals Zakim Khan and Kamin Khan's forces; TF *Hammer* consisted of ODAs 594 and 372, and Afghan General Zia Lodin.

[56] Wright, Bird, and Connors, *A Different Kind of War*, chap. 6; Stewart, *Operation Enduring Freedom*, 33-43.

[57] Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, 319-322; Wright, Bird, and Connors, *A Different Kind of War*, 154; Lieutenant General Franklin Hagenbeck, interview by Contemporary Operations Study Team, May 30, 2007, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 11. [Unpublished interview transcript.]

Another specific instance of integration occurred with the 101st Airborne's engineer company. The Charlie Company of the 326th Engineer Battalion deployed from Fort Campbell into Pakistan and later into Afghanistan in late 2001. In support of Operation Anaconda, the company provided an engineer squad to the ODAs 594 and 372 partnered with Afghan General Zia Lodin, and another breach squad to ODAs 571 and 392 and Afghan General Zakim Khan's forces located in Khowst. Both of these squads integrated with the SF teams in order to provide breaching expertise and equipment.[58]

An assault helicopter battalion, 4-101st, from the from the 101st Airborne Division's aviation brigade, deployed to OEF in May 2002 and provided air support to conventional forces, in addition to 3d BN, 75th Ranger Regiment and other SOF and government agencies. The conventional helicopter battalion performed airlift of SOF and conventional forces during offensive operations, resupply of SOF and conventional fixed sites, and air interdiction of enemy targets. Even though both JSOTFs North and South each had elements of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) at the time, there were simply not enough SOF rotary wing aircraft to support all SOF missions. This SOF and conventional forces integration arrangement was driven by the need for the SOF units to fill a capability gap.[59]

In addition to conventional and SOF aviation integration during offensive operations, these units often provided maintenance support as well. In early 2002 in Kandahar, the 3-160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment was collocated with the 1-159th Aviation from the 101st Airborne Division. These two units, coincidentally, were also collocated at their home station,

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[58] Major Mark Quander, interview by Operational Leadership Experiences Project Team, March 7, 2007, digital recording, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 10; Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, 282-284.

[59] Lieutenant Colonel Michael Shenk, interview by Operational Leadership Experiences Project Team, February 15, 2005, digital recording, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 6-7; Wright, Bird and Connors, *A Different Kind of War*, 331.

Hunter Army Airfield, GA. Both aviation units received logistical support from the forward support battalion of the 3-101st. Additionally, the conventional aviation unit supported the SOF unit by providing common repair parts, whereas the SOF unit would in turn support the conventional aviation unit by acquiring parts that where more difficult to get through the conventional supply channels.[60]

After the fall of the Taliban and Operation Anaconda, SOF and conventional units began establishing more fixed basing sites. Task Force Panther, the 3d Brigade 82d Airborne Division deployed in the summer of 2002 and provided infantry support to the SOF in theater. Part of the 3/82d concept of operations included pairing infantry rifle companies from 1-505th and 3-505th IN BNs with SF ODAs in safe houses along the Pakistani border.[61] The conventional infantry forces would provide security for the ODA safe houses, and conducted patrols to interdict Taliban or al-Qaeda forces attempting to cross into Afghanistan from Pakistan. The ODAs integrated for operations with the conventional forces specifically for cordon and search operations, where the conventional forces often provided the outer security and search efforts, while the culturally attuned ODAs and Afghan partners would engage with the populace.[62] Because these outposts were remote, the units relied on satellite communications to communicate with their headquarters; the conventional forces often had to rely on the SF team's more reliable communications equipment to reach their headquarters.[63]

In addition to the infantry support, 3/82d provided engineering support to the other

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[60] Major David Short, interview by Operational Leadership Experiences Project Team, January 4, 2006, digital recording, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 10.

[61] Major Steven Wallace, interview by Operational Leadership Experiences Project Team, October 6, 2010, digital recording, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 5-9.

[62] Wright, Bird, and Connors, *A Different Kind of War*, 213

[63] Wallace, interview, October 6, 2010, 5-9.

conventional forces and SOF throughout the theater. One of their major efforts was providing engineering support to establish these new firebases and improve existing sites with particular emphasis on winterizing. The SF teams received a significant amount of support in this effort to increase the force protection and life support–heating, clean water, basic shelter–capabilities of their austere locations.[64] The integration between the 3/82d and the SOF in 2002 was driven by the engineering capabilities and manpower that the conventional units possessed, and conversely the conventional units relied on communications capabilities that the SOF units possessed.

During the initial eighteen months of OEF, both SOF and conventional units were driven to integrate out of necessity. Each type of unit integrated to provide a capability that the other unit did not have–manpower, expertise, special equipment–in order to increase each other's effectiveness at accomplishing their missions.

The third structured question examined is: did these units prepare for integration and interoperability prior to conducting operations? Preparation for integrating with partner SOF or conventional forces could have occurred in several ways–prior to deployment, prior to a specific mission, on an ad-hoc or semi-routine basis, or not at all.

Units that deployed in the months immediately after 9/11 consisted of mainly SOF. Because of the immediacy of their new mission, they did not conduct any pre-deployment theater or mission-specific integration training. Similarly, the first conventional forces to deploy did not have the opportunity to conduct any integration training with SOF units in preparation for their deployment. For these units, preparation for integration took place only after arriving in theater, and was mostly driven by specific missions.

After arriving in theater in November 2001, and establishing initially in Jacobobad,

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[64] Lieutenant Colonel Steven Baker, interview by Operational Leadership Experiences Project Team, April 14, 2006, digital recording, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 5.

Pakistan, the 1-187th IN BN intelligence officer was able to integrate with the SOF intelligence cells. This particular unit received intelligence from the SOF teams that were already operating in Afghanistan, and made an effort to keep the SOF elements aware of his units operations in order to de-conflict and integrate both units operations in time and space.[65]

Operation Anaconda, the coalition operation involving US conventional forces and elements of the Afghan Army led by US Special Forces teams, is another example that highlights the level of integration efforts between these units. There is no evidence available to show that there was any significant effort, beyond exchanging LNOs, to prepare for the integration between either type of force prior to the start of the major named operation. Units below brigade or group level were constrained by distance from conducting integrated rehearsals, planning, or general coordination after General Franks approved the concept of the operation on February 26, 2002.[66] The TF *Rakkasan* maneuver units were located at Bagram Airfield while the SF teams and their Afghan counterparts were located nearly 150 kilometers away in safe houses near Gardez. Finally, the SOF special reconnaissance elements were located at Bagram, but only up until their insertion between 36-72 hours prior to the operation. One instance of preparation was noted, however; several SF teams prepared for integrating their Afghan clearing forces with the US conventional blocking elements. They did this by showing the Afghans what conventional US Army soldiers looked like in their combat uniform with full equipment by actually training with their attached conventional engineer team.[67] While the SF teams did not train or prepare with the specific unit that they would integrate with during the operation, one team did attempt pre-mission integration at the team level.

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[65] Major Greg Ford, interview by Operational Leadership Experiences Project Team, May 23, 2007, digital recording, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 13-20.

[66] Wright, Bird, and Connors, *A Different Kind of War,* 141.

[67] Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice,* 284.

This preparation for integration at the lower level was not consistent, though. The A/1-87 IN company commander, and other commanders in TF *Rakkasan*, received three-man SOT-A attachments with little time to conduct integrated training to fully develop an understanding of their capabilities. While this arrangement proved beneficial, the conventional company commander noted that he was not fully able to exploit this special operations asset because he had to learn their capabilities and integrate while already executing Operation Anaconda.[68]

In addition to conventional and SOF units preparing for integration prior to specific combat missions, several units may have also had the opportunity to train together or coordinate integration efforts prior to actually deploying to Afghanistan. For example, one infantry company commander in 3-187 recalled, as his sister battalions were already deployed to Afghanistan, his battalion remained at Ft Campbell for another four months. Until they deployed in March 2002, the battalion continued to train on weapons marksmanship and small unit live fire training. During this period, however, it is unclear whether or not they contacted either of their sister battalions to gain insight into the nature of the operations they were conducting or the units that they were integrating with. Furthermore, it is unclear whether or not they attempted to contact any rear-detachment elements of the 5th SFG, co-located at Ft Campbell, or any forward elements of the CJSOTF. [69] Coincidentally, the 3-187th would serve a QRF role for Special Forces teams located in Kandahar, and later secure the US Embassy and an SF compound in Kabul.[70] Besides lower unit level efforts to foster or prepare for integration on a known future deployment, SOF and conventional forces occasionally trained together at the combat training centers. Due to the rotational deployments, however, much of the training scheduled to occur after 9/11 was

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[68] Crombie, interview, March 30, 2006, 11.

[69] Villanueva, interview, December 8, 2006, 4.

[70] Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, 218; Villanueva, interview, December 8, 2006, 5.

cancelled.[71]

An example of ad-hoc or semi-routine preparations occurred between 4-101st Aviation and their SOF customers during their deployment in May 2002. The battalion operations officer from 4-101st recalls spending time educating the SOF units that he supported in theater on the capabilities and limitations of conventional aviation TTPs. Because 4-101st was the second aviation battalion from Ft Campbell to deploy, it was able to, and did, coordinate with its sister battalion, 3-101st Aviation, who was already in theater. It is unclear, however, if this unit attempted any integration activities with the Special Forces elements located on Ft Campbell prior to their deployment.[72]

The fourth structured question examined is: how did the units integrate across warfighting functions during operations? The Army's six warfighting functions–mission command, movement and maneuver, intelligence, logistics, protection, and fires–are categories through which commanders conceptualize capabilities and apply combat power.[73] Between the team and brigade level, conventional forces and SOF integrated across all of the six warfighting functions. The evidence shows several different command and control relationships established between lower-level SOF and CF units–the 1-87th IN BN assigned to the JSOTF in the opening months of OEF, the SOT-A attached to the TF *Rakkasan* conventional infantry companies in Operation Anaconda, and the 3/82d Airborne's conventional infantry companies attached to the Special Forces companies in late-2002. Integration in the fires, intelligence, and movement and maneuver warfighting functions was best displayed through the integration of the SF tams and conventional infantry battalions in Operation Anaconda. Conventional forces and SOF

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[71] Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, 44.

[72] Shenk, interview, February 15, 2005, 7.

[73] Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-9.

complimented each other logistically through informal arrangements throughout the studied time-period. Finally, integration in the protection warfighting function was best displayed by the numerous base-security roles that the conventional infantry units provided for the SOF elements throughout theater.

The fifth structured question examined is: did the units continue integration and interoperability efforts beyond just immediate operations, by fostering habitual relationships to prepare for future operations? Logistics integration seemed to be the most enduring area for integration, but was limited to unit rotations, as new relationships were established, previous support arrangements were halted, or new support arrangements were established. Most prevalent was SOF and conventional units complimenting each other's sustainment apparatus. This benefitted the SOF units by freeing up highly skilled operators to focus on combat operations as opposed to manual labor or support tasks, and by giving access to common bulk supply items, allowing SOF to allocate lift aircraft to SOF-specific items. Likewise, this benefited the conventional units by increasing access to harder to get parts and more responsive air transportation of resupply packages.[74]

Outside of the major named operation of this period, Operation Anaconda, during regular combat operations, there were a multitude of examples when conventional units were integrated with SOF partners for sustained periods, maintaining habitual relationships. Companies and platoons from the 10th Mountain, 101st and 82d Airborne routinely provided base security and cordon and search support to SOF, aviation brigades routinely provided aviation support to habitual SOF customers, and combat support units habitually provided unique support to SOF units. Conversely, there were fewer instances of SOF units habitually supporting the same

[74] Major Gary Brock, interview by Operational Leadership Experiences Project Team, October 25, 2011, digital recording, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 9.

conventional units.

The sixth and final structured question examined is: what after action critiques are available for instances of interoperability and integration regarding these operations? Each instance of integration previously mentioned were drawn from archived oral history interviews, and thus provided very limited detail on the extent of the levels, duration or assessment of integration. Furthermore, very little feedback was discovered concerning the effect of integration on combat operations, or the effect of integrative training on combat operations. However, several books and official studies provide generalized assessments about the conventional and SOF integration in Operation Anaconda and beyond. These assessments generally agree on the topics of command and control relationships, cultures, coordination, and communication as needing significant improvement. There were no reports of instances of integration that were deemed a failure, or prevented mission accomplishment; only that improvement to the integration process was needed to improve efficiency.

This section reviewed the strategic and operational context of the first two years of OEF. Next, it posed six structured questions regarding conventional and SOF integration in OEF and Operation Anaconda in particular. Each of the questions was posed to determine both general context and specific details of cases of integration throughout the covered period. The findings and analysis will be discussed in the next section.

Findings and Analysis

This study originated out of the desire to answer how Army conventional forces and special operations forces can maximize effects through integration in complex future characterized in the Army Operating Concept? The researcher analyzed instances of integration using the first two years of OEF, a time when the Army deployed in a crisis to fight an enemy it had not specifically trained for, as the case study.

The first hypothesis asserts that the effective integration of conventional forces and SOF in operations begins well before deployment–it must start with training. The evidence suggests that this hypothesis is supported. While units of all sizes, from team to group or brigade level integrated across a range of warfighting functions and a range of operations, there was little preparation for integration between conventional and SOF units. Prior to and after Operation Anaconda, units developed integrative relationships through coincidence or on an ad-hoc basis–as they found themselves engaged in operations in common time, space, and purpose–not in deliberate or methodical ways.

This remains true for Operation Anaconda. Because the concept of the operation of was approved by General Franks on 26 February, with the operation set to commence on 28 February, the major conventional and SOF maneuver units of TF *Rakkasan* and TF *Dagger* had little chance to prepare for integration knowing exactly what the approved scheme of maneuver would be. While the units could have prepared for integration prior to the final approval of the concept of operation, their geographic separation hindered this. Still, these conditions would not have prevented preparations such as key leader interaction or radio rehearsals. The frequency with which the units integrated and the dearth of reported instances of pre-integration preparation in OEF demonstrate that the requirements to integrate in a complex, unknown and unknowable, world will continue to arise out of operational necessity, and it is likely that units will have little time to prepare once engaged in combat. Similarly, the high operational tempo of the emerging

combat operations and the geographic separation of the units across the theater during OEF prevented a concerted effort in preparing for integration prior to major operations. A lesson to learn from this case study is that repeated interaction between SOF and conventional units below the brigade and group-level in peacetime or non-combat training scenarios would provide a foundation of understanding for integration that is applicable to combat operations. This peacetime training interaction will offset limited time available to specifically prepare for integration in the unknown and unknowable operating environments in the future.

The second hypothesis contends that the Army must foster habitual relationships between specific conventional and SOF units in peacetime training. The evidence suggests that this hypothesis has a mixed outcome. The units that integrated in OEF tended to maintain an integrative relationship with the same units for the periods that they were both deployed. During major named operations, units established new relationships with other units with which they had not shared a previous habitual relationship. Finally, the evidence shows that units that were co-located at home-station garrisons did not always conduct integrated training, but were often deployed together and even conducted combat operations in common time and space. The research methodology was not conducive to determining if units that shared a habitual relationship had increased effectiveness over units that did not share a habitual relationship, in peacetime or combat situations.

There are eleven out of the thirty-three active duty brigade combat teams that are collocated on a military installation with an active duty or National Guard Special Forces group. Likewise, the 75th Ranger Regiment's three maneuver battalions are collocated with four different conventional brigade combat teams. This distribution of forces across military posts can facilitate habitual training relationships for these collocated units. Units that are not collocated still have opportunities to conduct integrated training at the combat training centers, if the Army makes a more concerted effort to align or overlap SOF and conventional training rotations.

Combined CF and SOF training rotations at combat training centers can be done on a habitual or non-habitual basis. Even if CF and SOF units train together on a non-habitual basis, repeated integrated training opportunities would still serve to alleviate many of the issues that were present during the first two years of OEF: the lack of familiarity with culture, capabilities, or limitations of each other at the conventional company level and SOF team levels and below.

The third hypothesis asserts that because of the multitude of potential operations and force requirements in the complex, unknown and unknowable, operating environments of the future, there cannot be a standard training model or single MTOE modification to achieve conventional and SOF integration. There can, however, be practices instituted during peacetime training to facilitate immediate and effective integration in emerging combat operations. This case study did not reveal sufficient evidence to fully support this hypothesis.

The case study focused on the past performance of units in OEF, and the research was based predominantly on participants after action accounts and institutional and academic studies focused on the performance in OEF. Because the case study did not include material related to pre-deployment training plans, past combat training center rotational patterns, or projected training plans, the researcher was unable to prove or disprove any particular model for integration. Despite this, integration of conventional forces and SOF in combat, as seen in this case study, can occur at all levels, from the level of a three-man SOF team to JSOTF HQ level– consequently, in the absence of any institutionalized model, the integration of CF and SOF in pre-deployment training should also occur at the lowest levels. Without an institutionalized model, however, future cases of pre-deployment integration will likely continue to be based on anticipated future needs, personal relationships, and home-station proximity.

Even without an institutionalized model for integration, the combat training centers can fulfill the need to prepare SOF and conventional units for combat integration. This supports the

recommendations provided by MAJ Erik Brown's 2003 thesis. Because the Army must continue to operate with constricted budgets and a reduced personnel strength, the Army must economize resources at all opportunities. The combat training centers should be the institutional peacetime integrator of CF and SOF. With nearly 20 conventional unit training rotations per year, the US-based combat training centers provide 20 opportunities for conventional and SOF units below the conventional brigade and Special Forces company or Ranger battalion level to conduct integrated training. The Army can maximize the training centers by making all training center rotations inclusive of both conventional and SOF scenarios–this will inculcate the spirit of conventional and SOF integration across the widest audience. By integrating at combat training centers, regardless of the threat or environment trained against, units will be better able to generalize their experiences of integration in new combat environments and against new enemies.

Given the absence of evidence in this case study to quantify an increased effectiveness of units that had shared a habitual integrative relationship over those that had not, and the absence of evidence to suggest a formal integrative training model, one might inquire if any effort to arrange training schedules to achieve integrative training in peacetime will yield any proportional benefit in combat. While habitual relationships are ideal but not always feasible, training with any SOF or conventional unit will have generalizable application to operating with similar units in combat.[75] Jervis's systems theory asserts that, among interacting elements, it is difficult to apportion responsibility for the extent and direction of impact, it may be entirely impossible to measure the tangible outcomes of integration versus non-integration.[76] Despite this, one can assert

[75] Habitual relationships rely on aligned training and deployment cycles. CF and SOF have fundamentally different cycles. In order to ensure habitual relationships, unit force generation and training cycles must be aligned.

[76] Jervis, *System Effects*, 40.

that integration of CF and SOF in training and combat will exhibit the characteristic of a complex system in which effects *greater than* the sum of the parts will emerge from the whole.[77] This mirrors what Army doctrine refers to as an effect of the application of combined arms: achieving an effect greater than if each arm was used separately or sequentially.[78]

The Army's Operating Concept postulates that "the environment the Army will operate in is unknown. . ." and that "the Army cannot predict who it will fight, where it will fight, and with what coalition it will fight."[79] Because of the unknown nature of the future threat and environment, the Army must be prepared for the widest array of future missions. As OEF has shown, integration will occur at all levels and across all warfighting functions. Inherently, any instance of pre-deployment integration of SOF and CF will benefit the whole force to some degree through the familiarizing of cultures and capabilities.

This section compared the hypotheses with the evidence uncovered during research. Of the starting hypotheses, only one was fully supported–that effective integration of CF and SOF begins prior to any deployment. The other hypothesis, that the Army must institute habitual training relationships and that there cannot be a single model for pre-deployment integration, were neither fully supported nor fully refuted. The final section will summarize the study and provide recommendations for further research.

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[77] Neil Harrison, ""Thinking About the World We Make," in *Complexity in World Politics,* ed. Neil Harrison (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2006), 7.

[78] ADRP 3-0, 1-14.

[79] TRADOC Pam 525-3-1, *The US Army Operating Concept*, iii.

Conclusion

As the US Army inherited a major role in the nation's response to 9/11, the SOF-centric operations with the Northern Alliance to defeat the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan soon transformed into large-scale conventional operations. Within months, the joint force headquarters in Afghanistan, a conventional Army division, was leading the largest operation of the war–Operation Anaconda. Conventional forces and special operations forces operated in common time, space, and purpose without having specifically prepared to integrate–either with each other, or against a known enemy.

Numerous accounts and reviews of OEF and Operation Anaconda have since emerged. From these accounts have come valuable lessons that the US Army has incorporated into its doctrine–these lessons focus on how CF and SOF can better integrate while in combat. Despite the lessons drawn from OEF and Operations Anaconda, there remains a gap in doctrine–how can CF and SOF best integrate in peacetime training, in order to be better prepared for combat operations? This study sought to answer that question and to contribute to addressing the Army's Operating Concept and Army Warfighting Challenge #14 - *How to integrate joint, interorganizational, and multinational partner capabilities and campaigns to ensure unity of effort and accomplish missions across the range of military operations.*[80]

The first two years of OEF and its hallmark battle Operation Anaconda show that, once engaged in combat operations, units will integrate in order to fill expertise or capability gaps, and mostly on an ad-hoc basis. Furthermore, units will integrate at all levels and across all warfighting functions. Units operating against an unknown enemy in an unknowable environment will not be afforded the time to build familiarity with each other's capabilities, limitations, and

[80] Army Capabilities Integration Center "Army Warfighting Challenges (AWfC)," August 26, 2015.

standard operating procedures–the best time to do this is prior to even deploying. This uncertainty, and need to integrate SOF and CF is a manifestation of what Russian theorist Gerogii Isserson spoke of when he advocated for operational art's freedom to choose new methods to influence the enemy. OEF has shown that units will employ creative methods of integration to exert influence over the enemy.

Additionally, there were numerous accounts that, while CF and SOF integrated and achieved mission success, they did not integrate to their fullest, or there was significant lag-time in integrating with efficiency, because of unfamiliarity with culture, capabilities, or limitations of the others. This familiarity can and should be gained through integrative training in peacetime, both in and out of the CTCs, not while engaged in fast-paced combat operations.

Further research should be conducted on conventional and SOF unit training cycles, the regional alignment responsibilities of conventional forces, and regional expertise of SOF forces in order to determine the most applicable model for peacetime training integration. Finally, additional research should be conducted to determine to what extent pre-deployment integration, ad-hoc integration training in while in combat, or no integration training at all, has any tangible impact on combat operations. As the Army operates in a complex world, the integration of SOF and conventional forces will remain a necessity. To *win* in a complex world, SOF and conventional forces must be able to integrate for emerging combat operations immediately, by having a solid foundation of integrated training, and an understanding of the capabilities and limitations of each other's unit.

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